



Renaissance *to* Goya

PRINTS AND DRAWINGS FROM SPAIN

Mark P. McDonald

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Introduction

The subject of Spanish prints and drawings is little known outside Spain. It is generally assumed these were marginal arts practised by a few well-known artists such as José de Ribera (1591–1652), Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617–82) and Francisco de Goya (1746–1828). The aim of this study is to present an overview of the rich history of the graphic arts in Spain from around the end of the fourteenth century through to and including Goya. Examples of prints and drawings from the fifteenth until the mid-sixteenth century are few. Those that survive reflect the style and techniques of foreign artists working in Spain, a subject that is vital for clarifying origins that become much clearer in the later period, when the evidence is more abundant. From the second half of the sixteenth century, drawing became an integral part of artistic practice, and a survey of Spanish drawings shows that they were made and used as elsewhere in Europe. Printmaking developed at a slower pace and it was not until the eighteenth century that it caught up with the rest of Europe.

As it is not feasible to discuss every Spanish draughtsman or printmaker over a 400-year period, this study concentrates on the most significant of them, where possible using examples from the British Museum. Two broad principles guide the selection of works both in this book and in the exhibition it accompanies. The first is to show the variety in form and function of prints and drawings made in Spain, and the second is to dispel the myth that drawing was a fringe activity and printmaking even more so. On the whole, this study concentrates on securely attributed examples by the artists involved, thereby avoiding the prickly issues of connoisseurship.

The study is divided into eight chapters, with an appendix analysing the history and types of paper used by artists in Spain. The first chapter provides an overview of the historiography of prints and drawings in Spain, how they have been regarded and, in order to demonstrate simply what was made, a summary of their principal types and characteristics. The second chapter looks at the earliest prints and drawings and the chapters that follow are arranged by major Spanish cities, mainly for convenience but also to emphasize regional differences. Most of the discussion relates to Madrid because it was the most vibrant artistic centre from the late sixteenth century and had enormous influence throughout Spain. With regard to Madrid, prints and drawings are discussed separately, whereas in the chapters on the regional centres (Seville and Valencia) they are integrated because the evidence is less compelling. The last chapter is devoted to Goya, because his prodigious activity as a draughtsman and printmaker redefined the role of prints and drawings in Spanish art. While a list of the works in the exhibition is given on p. 307, more complete entries and biographical information about the artists can be found on the

Prints and drawings in Spain: attitudes and evidence

In accounts of art in Spain during the Renaissance and early modern period it has often been suggested that Spanish artists did not draw and that print production was insignificant. These attitudes should broadly be understood not so much as the result of an unwillingness to engage with such prints and drawings as a reflection of the difficulties of identifying them as Spanish and understanding the background to their creation. Various theories have been put forward to explain the supposed absence of a significant tradition of prints and drawings in Spain. The underlying evidence needs to be examined in order for these assumptions to be challenged.

Research into other arts in Spain – painting, sculpture and architecture – reveals a visual culture remarkable for its variety and richness. In the case of prints and drawings, however, relatively little scholarship exists and only in cases of the best-known artists have works been looked at together. The reasons for this are complex but rooted in the nineteenth-century *desamortización* (confiscation of Church possessions) and subsequent dispersal of collections of Spanish art; the inaccessibility of surviving collections in Spain, especially during the Franco era; the problem of identifying works, many of which languish in boxes marked ‘anonymous’ and, even if identifiable, with no explanation of the rationale of the attribution. Scholars of Spanish prints and drawings have historically focused their attention largely on much-needed collection catalogues and on defining the work of individual artists.¹ Only in recent decades has attention begun to turn to their broader artistic and cultural significance.²

Drawings

Spanish drawings are scarce compared with those of other schools, but it cannot be assumed from this that Spanish artists did not draw. Modern attitudes can be traced to the nineteenth century. In 1880 the French art historian Philippe de Chennevières wrote that Spanish drawings had never been abundant in collections, noting the few in foreign hands including those bought from the Madrazo family in Spain by John Charles Robinson and passed to the British Museum. Chennevières observed that when he made enquiries about Spanish drawings in Madrid and Seville in 1870, ‘no one had anything to say’.³

The paucity of Spanish drawings gave rise to theories about artistic practice in Spain based on Romantic ideas of artistic temperament. These were augmented by the study of psychology during the twentieth century. In Erwin Gradmann’s introduction to his 1946 study of Spanish drawings he

Detail of fig. 21, see p. 39

Leocardia is a finished study for his painting (figs 6–7, p. 86). Like the Carducho drawing, it is squared so that each section could be transferred to the canvas.

Cartoons are full-scale drawings made to transfer a design to another surface.⁴⁷ These are different from squared drawings because the size of the sheet corresponds to the final composition. Cartoons were not normally intended to be preserved and most were destroyed in the process of transfer, so very few survive. How they were used can often be determined from evidence on the surface of the painting or fresco, such as incised lines, pinpricks or other marks. There is evidence for the use of cartoons in late sixteenth-century Spain in surviving drawings by artists working at the monastery of the Escorial (see Chapter 3). An example is Gaspar Becerra's half-figure of a male, a fragment of a highly finished cartoon for a now destroyed fresco at the palace of the Alcázar in Madrid (fig. 22, p. 72).⁴⁸ Cartoons were used in a variety of ways at the Escorial: an unusual survival is a large group of carefully pricked drawings by different artists for embroidered liturgical vestments. One of the drawings from the group is *Christ Distributing Bread to His Disciples after his Resurrection* (fig. 25, p. 74).

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Vicente Carducho

The Virgin Appearing to Father Juan Fort (detail showing *Christ Appearing to Father Juan Fort*), 1626–32

Oil on canvas,
3450 x 3190 mm
(whole painting)
Museo del Prado, Madrid
P.5577

8

Vicente Carducho

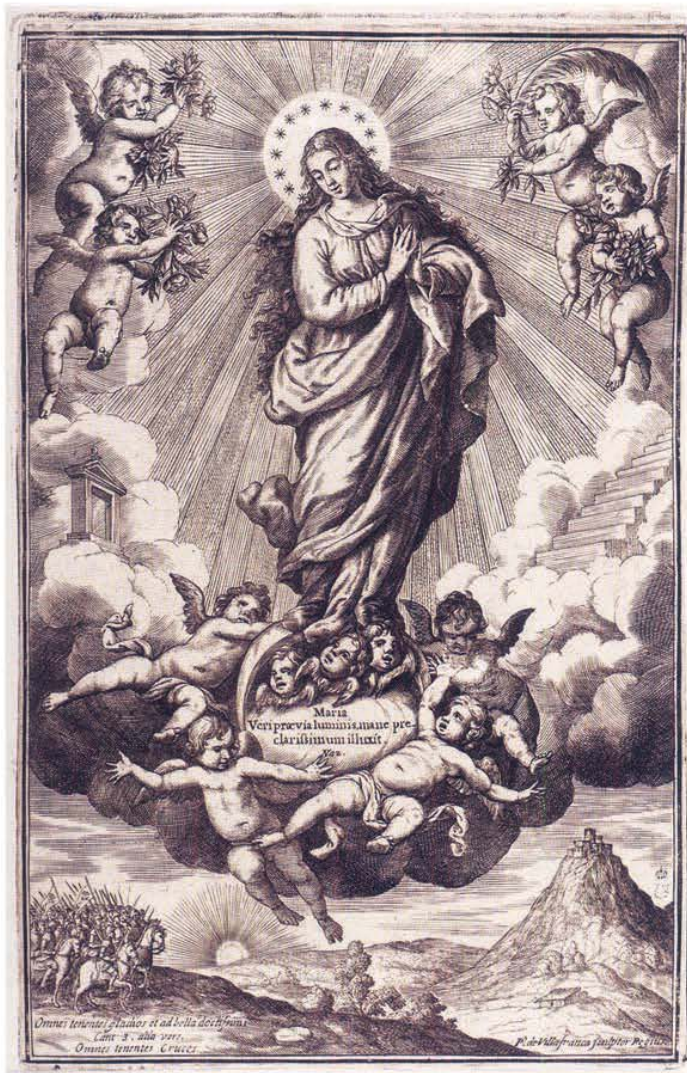
Christ Appearing to Father Juan Fort, 1626–32

Black chalk, squared for
transfer, 387 x 194 mm
British Museum, London
1920.1116.21



Prints

Prints reproducing a work of art usually bear the designer's name.⁵⁹ These were uncommon in Spain before the second half of the eighteenth century, although an early exception is Diego de Astor's 1606 etching after El Greco's *Saint Francis and Brother Leo Meditating on Death* (fig. 32, p. 79). During the seventeenth century a type of print developed in Madrid where part of the composition was original and part of it reproduced. For example, Pedro de Villafranca's engraved portrait of Philip IV reproducing Velázquez's painting is embedded within an elaborate design devised by Villafranca (fig. 58, p. 117). Reproductive prints produced in Spain during the eighteenth century fall into two categories: copper-plate engravings and etchings. The former faithfully follow the model, and are exemplified here by Fernando Selma's engraved *Saint Ildephonsus Receiving the Chasuble from the Virgin* (1789–1800) after Murillo (fig. 41, p. 218). The expressive quality of the technique of etchings, on the other hand, was used to interpret the painted original, as in Ramón Bayeu's *Liberation of Saint Peter* after Guercino (fig. 14).⁶⁰

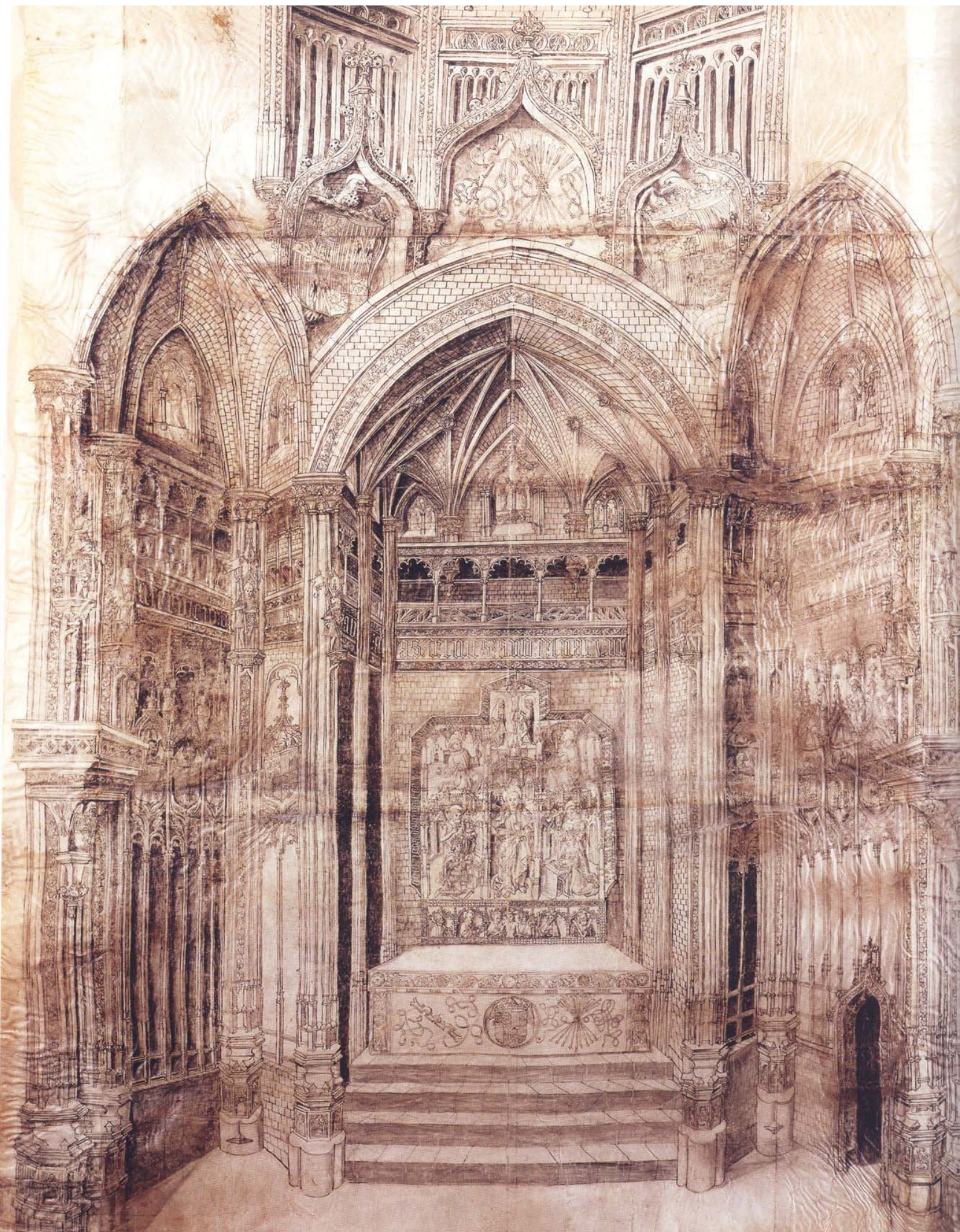


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Pedro de Villafranca

Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, 1670s

Engraving, 268 x 171 mm
Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid
12893



Drawings and prints before 1500 and early collecting in Spain

Drawings

The evidence for drawing in Spain before the middle of the sixteenth century is scarce. Few sheets dating from before 1500 have been identified, and they are so different in appearance and purpose that any attempt to find unifying characteristics requires careful qualification. Moreover, a fundamental problem with identifying these early drawings is that there is little in their character to identify them as Spanish, except the knowledge that they were made in the Iberian Peninsula at a time when it comprised different kingdoms. They are not indicative of a national or local style but of an emerging artistic practice that became much more distinctive later in the sixteenth century.¹ The sheets that date from before 1500 broadly reflect Franco-Flemish and Italian traditions of design; Italian influences dominated after 1500.²

The origins of autonomous drawings have been much debated, and sometimes images in manuscripts of the tenth to fifteenth centuries have been regarded as early evidence of drawing in Spain.³ Although drawing in different forms occurred well before the Renaissance, a distinction must be made between underdrawing serving a directly preparatory function (as in a manuscript illustration, a mural or a panel painting) and drawing in the more creative, independent sense that it is used here.⁴ This discussion focuses on drawings having a degree of independent validation as a particular artistic process often associated with an identified artist. The Italian concept of *disegno*, with its dual meaning of design and drawing, is a helpful indicator of independent intention, recognizing as it does the specific elements of intellectual idea and artistic practice.⁵ Definitions are invariably challenged by exceptions, and there is no moment when past practices were abandoned and modern drawing in a creative sense was suddenly born. The point at which drawings were recognized as independent objects to be valued, preserved and collected seems however to have been later in Spain than in Italy.

While it is difficult to gauge the extent of drawing in fifteenth-century Spain, from the surviving evidence it seems to have been widespread. They were mainly executed on the durable surface of parchment, intended as independent objects, their intentions different from drawings on paper. The use of pen, ink and paper (a relatively fragile and less expensive material) indicates a significant shift in artistic practice with regard to drawing. Sets of bound drawings were sometimes produced to provide a pictorial archive for artists, and these were usually drawn on parchment to increase their longevity.⁶ Unusually, a set of twenty-one pen-and-ink drawings on paper made around 1395–1400 in a Valencia workshop were bound into a model book.⁷ These have been associated with at least two artists, the Master of the Retable of San Jorge del

Detail of fig. 4, see p. 49

Importing graphic practices: Castile 1550–1600

In October 1555 Charles made Philip ruler of the Netherlands, and in January 1556 King of Spain. Four years later, in 1561, Philip II installed the first permanent court at Madrid. This established the town as a centre of political power and the base from which the Spanish monarchy governed its empire. By the end of the century Madrid had undergone a dramatic transformation thanks to a tremendous increase in population and size.¹ It became a magnet for different trades, professional groups and administrative offices. The effect that Philip II had on the development of culture in Madrid has long been recognized. His patronage of foreign and Spanish-born artists to decorate his residences and his dedication to collecting signalled a new era in Spain.²

Before returning to Spain in August 1559, Philip had spent five years extensively touring Europe to familiarize himself with the territories under his rule. His visits during this period to palaces, noble residences and monasteries laid the foundation for his lifelong interest in architecture, and helped him crystallize plans to build a significant monument. The monastery-palace of the Escorial, 50 km north-west of Madrid, was to be the greatest architectural achievement of Philip's reign and has played a central role in Spain's history since it was built. Begun in 1563, the Escorial was the designated burial chamber of the Hapsburg dynasty. The need to find a suitable burial place for Charles V, whose body lay at the Hieronymite monastery at Yuste in Extremadura, was uppermost in Philip's mind during the planning stages of the project. It was to become not only the symbolic bastion of Catholicism, but also a lasting monument to Philip's name and the repository for his vast collections of art, relics and natural objects, and his library. The personal significance of the monastery for Philip is also revealed by its dedication to Saint Lawrence in recognition of the Spanish victory over the French at the battle of St Quentin, on the saint's feast day of 10 August 1557, at which the king was present.³

The principal designer of the monastery, Juan Bautista de Toledo (c.1515–67), had been called to Madrid from Naples and appointed Royal Architect in 1559 to renovate Philip's existing residences.⁴ In August 1563 he was made master of the Escorial fabric. In the same year Juan de Herrera was appointed a draughtsman in his office; he became chief in 1579.⁵ The extensive surviving documentation reveals that Philip worked closely with Juan Bautista from the initial stages of planning and monitored the project throughout the twenty-one years it took to build.⁶ The most important record is that of the historian and librarian Fray José de Sigüenza, whose *La fundación del monasterio de El Escorial* (1605) provides a detailed account of the monastery's construction and decoration, and often includes a critique of the works of art. The

Detail of fig. 14, see p. 67

Federico Zuccaro*The Pentecost*, 1586–8

Pen and brown ink with grey wash and white highlights on blue paper, squared for transfer, 355 x 260 mm
 Royal Library, Windsor Castle
 RL 06015



El Greco (Domenikos Thetokopoulos, 1541–1614) stands apart from the Italians who worked in Spain but was very much part of their tradition. Trained in Crete, he moved to Venice around 1567 where he seems to have worked on his own, although he was strongly influenced by Titian and Tintoretto. Arriving in Spain in 1576, El Greco settled in Toledo where he remained for the rest of his life. In 1580 he was commissioned to paint the *Martyrdom of Saint Maurice* for an altar at the Escorial, but two years later it was rejected by Philip II on the grounds of its inappropriate iconography and also perhaps its style, and he received no further commissions from the king. El Greco was profoundly interested in drawing, and in Spain he continued what he had learned in Italy.³³ The annotations he made in his copy of Vitruvius' *Ten Books on Architecture* recommend that students attain proficiency in drawing through constant practice, for it was fundamental to good painting, more so than measurement or proportion.³⁴ Later in his annotations El Greco quotes Michelangelo who, when asked what was the most important part of painting,

Madrid as artistic capital 1600–1700

The main developments in the evolution of prints and drawings in Spain in and around Madrid during the second half of the sixteenth century can be summarized as changes in techniques and practices in an environment receptive to innovation. The urban development that followed the court settling in Madrid shaped artistic ambitions. Whereas the court was the main body responsible for nourishing the artistic economy, religious communities and a wealthy middle class became economically powerful clients.

Philip II died in September 1598, after a reign of almost fifty years, during which he became one of the most powerful collectors and patrons of the arts in the world. He was succeeded by his son, Philip III, whose political achievements and status as a collector and patron are overshadowed by those of his father and his own son, Philip IV, who succeeded him, in 1621. But Philip III achieved considerable success as a patron, as did members of his circle, most notably his *de facto* prime minister, the Duke of Lerma (Francisco Gómez de Sandoval).¹ Philip left the duke to assume the public role of patron of the arts, and he became the driving force behind much of the artistic activity at court.² The duke was devoted to building his collection and patronized artists such as El Greco, Peter Paul Rubens and others.

With regard to prints and drawings, after the wheels of change had been set in motion by Philip II, it is difficult to discern whether his son had any impact on their development. By the time Philip III ascended the throne the drawing styles of the emerging generation of artists, including Vicente Carducho and Eugenio Cajés, had largely been shaped by contact with the Italians at the Escorial. The decorations of the palace and monastery continued to be a major influence on Spanish art. Similarly, the types of prints and their uses introduced during the reign of Philip II continued largely unchanged. A subtle difference emerging at the turn of the century was the increasing number of prints relating to Spain's relations with wider Europe, and to political events such as the conquest of Malacca in Indonesia in 1605, or the expulsion of the moors from Spain in 1609–14.³ Printing became more developed during the early seventeenth century because it could quickly disseminate news about contemporary events. As in the late sixteenth century, many of the prints that relate to Philip III's reign were made outside Spain. Notable exceptions are the engravings by Juan Schorquens on the subject of the king's voyage to Portugal in 1622, which were made in Madrid (fig. 56, p. 116).

In the first two years of his reign Philip III reverted to the practice of his forebears of having an itinerant court that rarely settled in one place for more than a fortnight. In 1601 he decided to relocate the entire court from Madrid to Valladolid, where it remained until 1606. The people of Madrid mourned

Detail of fig. 14, see p. 90

Patricio Cajés

The Sons of Jacob Presenting him with Joseph's Tunic,
c.1607–12

Pen and brown ink, black chalk,
pink and brown wash over
incised lines, 241 x 295 mm
Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid
DIB/13/10/3



Between 1607 and 1609 Carducho produced a number of drawings for a ceiling design in the chapel of El Pardo.¹⁷ One of these shows several sketches of an angel in pen and ink (fig. 2), one of them holding the Host. A finished study of the entire ceiling, with the *Triumph of the Eucharist* in the centre (fig. 3), was probably submitted for approval. The studies reflect Carducho's approach to drawing, his technique corresponding closely to its purpose. His drawings should also be seen in context of other artists working alongside him, as they reflect the continuation of earlier practices. For example, the Italian-born Patricio Cajés (c.1540–1612) was amongst the older artists working at El Pardo. His pen-and-wash drawing for the Queen's Gallery fresco, *The Sons of Jacob Presenting him with Joseph's Tunic* (fig. 4) is incised using a blind stylus to guide the design, a tried and tested Italian drawing technique.¹⁸ Patricio made extensive use of wash, which greatly influenced his son Eugenio, for whom it became the medium he used most often and to greatest effect.

Vicente Carducho and Eugenio Cajés collaborated on commissions throughout their careers. An imposing drawing for the high altar of the church for the monastery of Guadalupe (Cáceres) by the architect Juan Gómez de Mora (1586–1648) shows a four-storey structure with sculptures of saints standing in niches, a painted crucifixion in the uppermost section flanked by the Virgin and Saint John the Baptist, coats of arms and allegorical figures (fig. 5).¹⁹ Reinforcing a point made earlier, that artists based in Madrid often had to undertake work in distant places, the sheet is especially valuable for what it reveals about the practical use of drawings and the process of designing an altar in the early seventeenth century. The inscription along the bottom, signed and dated by Mora 20 December 1614, describes the pictorial programme, the arrangement of the figures and the type of stone to be used, and lists those involved in its execution.²⁰ The altar structure was designed by

Juan Gómez de Mora

*The High Altar of the Church
of the Monastery of Guadalupe,*
1614

Pen and brown ink, brush
and red ink, washes in brown
and red over incised lines,
635 x 346 mm
Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid
DIB/16/34/2

Andalusia 1500–1700

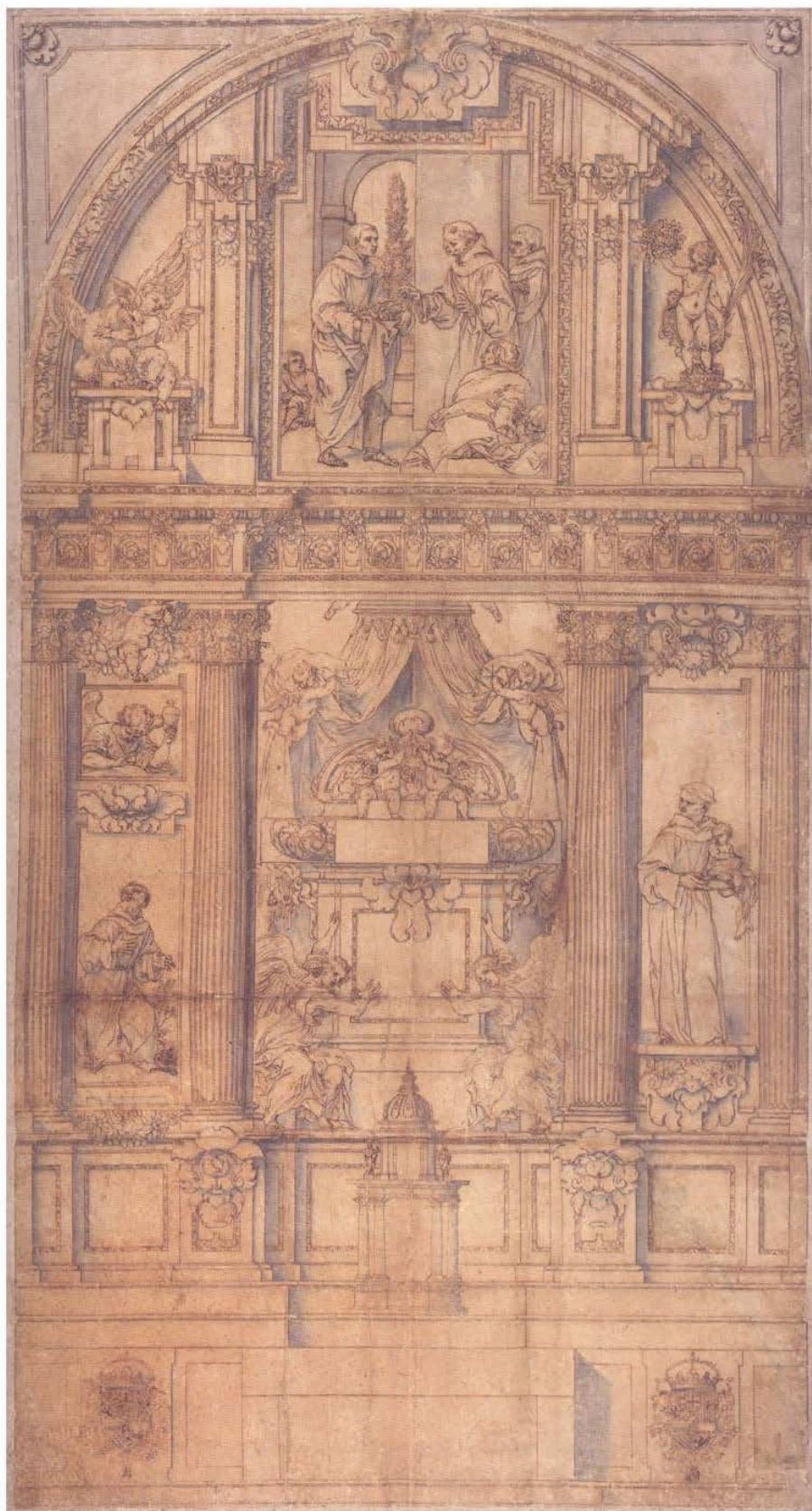
The majority of prints and drawings by artists working in Andalusia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are not well known. Significantly, regional centres such as Seville had no court to act as a focus for artistic practice, to provide impetus for printmaking or to encourage the preservation of drawings. In regional centres commissions came mainly from church and private patrons. Artists who trained in Seville and went on to have successful careers in Madrid include Diego Velázquez, Francisco Herrera the Younger and Alonso Cano (see Chapter 4). While the mobility of these and other artists complicates the question of regional style, dominating figures such as Francisco Pacheco in Seville and Antonio del Castillo in Córdoba strongly influenced those who worked with them.

Drawing in Andalusia during the sixteenth century

During the early years of the sixteenth century, after the discovery of the New World, Seville became the largest city in Spain and the commercial centre of the Spanish Empire. Her years of greatest prosperity were between 1592 and 1622; at the turn of the seventeenth century growth reached a peak, with a population of over 150,000.¹ The vitality of Seville's commerce meant that more individuals were now able to commission and buy works of art, although the highly cultivated urban elite was mainly interested in the classical past rather than in patronizing local artists, several of them forming important collections of mostly Italian art.² During the sixteenth century Seville was an urban conurbation predominately responding to its role as a commercial hub³ and it is difficult to form a clear picture of workshop practice during these years: it was not until the seventeenth century that the city became a centre of artistic production.⁴

The dominant style of painting in sixteenth-century Seville blended Italian and Flemish elements into a form of Spanish mannerism that later turned to naturalism.⁵ The most significant Spanish artists to work in Andalusia, Luis de Vargas (c.1505/6–67) and Pablo de Céspedes (c.1540–1608), like their Castilian counterparts, travelled to Italy where they were exposed to the vibrancy and sophistication of Italian art.⁶ Vargas, who was born in Seville, is thought to have spent two periods in Rome, in 1527–34 and around 1555–61. Here he was greatly influenced by Francesco Salviati and collaborated with Perino del Vaga on fresco projects.⁷ He also made a copy in red chalk of the figure of the Christ Child from Perino's 1534 *Nativity*,⁸ one of a group of similar drawings produced while he was in Italy.⁹ His delicate study for the *Virgin and Child* (fig. 1), also in this group, clearly shows Italian influence.¹⁰

Detail of fig. 36, see p. 149



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Alonso Cano

*Design for the Chapel
of San Diego de Alcalá in the
Convent of Santa María de Jesús
at Alcalá de Henares, 1657–8*

Pen and brown ink, with brown
and blue wash, selectively
incised, 1176 x 629 mm
The Pierpont Morgan Library,
New York
1986.46



Valencia 1500–1700 and Ribera in Naples

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the city of Valencia, on Spain's eastern seaboard, controlled a thriving commercial trade in the Mediterranean. For many merchants and travellers it was the point of entry before moving to other parts of the Peninsular. Valencia's wealth and cosmopolitan nature were expressed from the fifteenth century through extensive artistic patronage. Valencian artists initially reflected the many strands of Northern art, sometimes described as 'International Gothic', and later Roman and Tuscan painting, transformed into a distinctive local manner.¹

As discussed in Chapter 2, evidence for prints and drawings in Spain before 1500 is patchy, and Valencia was one of the first places where graphic practices associated with Renaissance Italy took hold. Three of the most significant Spanish artists working in Valencia in the early sixteenth century, were Fernando Yáñez de la Almedina (c.1465/70–1536), Fernando Llanos (c.1465/70–c.1525) and Vicente Macip (c.1475–1550), all of whom spent time in Italy. Notarial documents in Florence dating from April and August 1505 record payments made to 'Ferrando Spagnolo' for collaborating with Leonardo da Vinci on the *Battle of Anghiari*; there has been much debate as to whether this refers to Fernando Yáñez or Fernando Llanos.² Recent discussion leans toward Llanos, because his compositions and figures show a greater dependency on Leonardo than those of Yáñez, whose work is filled with references to the work of Filippino Lippi, especially his frescos in the Carafa Chapel, Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome (1488–1503).³ It is not known exactly when these three Spanish artists set out for Italy, nor whether they went individually or together, but they were back in Valencia by the end of 1506, their styles powerfully reflecting the influence of their time abroad.

While it is likely that Fernando Llanos did make drawings, none seems to have survived. However, a number of extant studies by Yáñez on prepared paper in metalpoint and others in sanguine wash demonstrate that he was an active draughtsman.⁴ Yáñez's metalpoint studies are the earliest evidence of the technique being used in Spain, and they derive from the drawings by Lippi and his circle (fig. 1).⁵ Yáñez's delicate manner is revealed by his *Standing Woman in Profile Facing Left* (fig. 2), a chalk-and-wash drawing with touches of metalpoint, possibly from about 1518–19. He subsequently used this in more than one composition, such as the Virgin's companion in the *Visitation* in the Peso Chapel of Cuenca Cathedral, dated around 1531–6.⁶ Recycling in this way is very much in keeping with the tradition of pattern-book images, the value of the motif resting as much in the quality of invention as the possibilities of revising it in diverse contexts. There are documentary references to other drawings by Yáñez that no longer survive, for example a

Detail of fig. 32, see p. 186



Per Mella

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The eighteenth-century reinvention of the graphic arts

Discussion of art in Spain during the eighteenth century is generally separated into two halves. The first is focused on the court in Madrid and the prevailing French and Italian taste up to 1750, and the second on the emergence of new styles and artists, the most important of whom is Francisco de Goya.¹ Whereas Goya's graphic work forms a corpus unequalled amongst his peers, the artistic context from which he emerged is sometimes not given due credit.² The fact is that the development of prints and drawings during the eighteenth century in Spain transformed graphic practices, giving them a much wider cultural significance than is often acknowledged.

Philip V was the first Bourbon and the longest-serving king in the history of modern Spain. He came to the throne in 1700 and married his first wife, Princess María Luisa of Savoy, in 1701; after her death he married Isabel de Farnesio (Elisabetta Farnese) in 1714. Philip was strongly influenced by Louis XIV's taste and wished to replicate the French court style in Madrid. As the aesthetic ambitions of monarchs were expressed through the artists they employed to renovate and decorate their residences,³ the accession of the Bourbon monarchy was one of a number of factors that brought about artistic change in Madrid – and throughout Spain. Another factor was the deaths of major late seventeenth-century Spanish artists and their followers, such as Claudio Coello in Madrid (1693) and Murillo in Seville (1682), which resulted in a scarcity of native artists able to continue their traditions.

Printmaking during the first half of the eighteenth century continued to suffer from the absence of an apprenticeship system. Prints were mainly made for book illustrations and, with few exceptions, were not of high quality. In Madrid the printing presses were generally old and worn, and the change in monarchy did little to improve the situation. However, printmaking during the second half of the century underwent dramatic transformation, reflecting Enlightenment attitudes and a new awareness of its significance and potential uses. The range of subjects represented in both prints and drawings greatly expanded and the pattern prints, devotional images and records of processions of the previous century were augmented by scientific and anatomical illustration, architectural, costume, landscape, popular and reproductive prints, leading to a national manifestation of eighteenth-century modernity.⁴ The epicentre of this visual revolution was Madrid, as the regional centres failed to maintain the importance they had achieved during the previous century.

Drawings and prints c.1700–1750

Drawings of the first half of the eighteenth century can broadly be divided into two categories, work that continued the high baroque style and work that

Fig. 22, see p. 206



Pr linage a circoz

Francisco de Goya (1746–1828)

Francisco de Goya's death in Bordeaux on 16 April 1828, at the age of eighty-two, brought to an end a career during which he produced a body of work remarkable for its imagination, artistic vision and profound humanity. Goya's prints and drawings are among his most compelling works. Because they were not commissioned, they allowed him to explore fantastic subjects, human beliefs and behaviour, often creating complex meaning through series of images. He witnessed momentous social and political change, including the French occupation of Spain and the horrific effects of the Inquisition. His political liberalism, criticism of superstition and distaste for intellectual oppression reflected eighteenth-century Enlightenment ideals.¹ But to view Goya as an artist who merely embodied Enlightenment ideology is simplistic: as Janis Tomlinson observes, 'the Enlightenment in Spain is defined just as much by the limits imposed upon its ideas as by the contradictions that arose in society as a result of their diffusion'.²

Goya created almost three hundred prints and about nine hundred drawings.³ The selection featured here demonstrates the range of his graphic abilities and the subjects that absorbed him. Although his dedication to drawing and printmaking sets Goya apart, he was very far from being a 'lone genius' unaffected by his contemporaries, and his art should be seen in the context of the unprecedented scientific, social and artistic developments that were taking place in Spain and the rest of Europe during the eighteenth century. Much attention has been given to Goya's print series but less to the albums – or more accurately, sketchbooks – of drawings, which he did not begin until he was fifty. Before this time, drawing seems to have played a conventional role in his practice. The albums allowed Goya to express his most private thoughts and are a rich repository of imagery, providing extraordinary insight to his imagination and creative process. Comprising a personal iconography, many drawings have captions that sometimes elucidate their meaning, but often deepen their complexity. Goya numbered many of the drawings in the albums, sometimes renumbering them later, indicating that their sequence was important to him. He worked on more than one project at the same time, revisiting his various preoccupations in new and evocative ways. Goya's prints and drawings worked together and are discussed here chronologically.⁴

Earliest graphic work to the mid-1790s

Francisco Goya y Lucientes was born in Fuendetodos near Zaragoza, in the province of Aragon. He began his artistic training with José Luzán Martínez (1710–85), who also taught Francisco and Ramón Bayeu (see Chapter 7). Goya's lifelong interest in prints no doubt began at this time, copying them

Detail of fig. 35, see p. 255